



## Is Consumer Behavior Affecting Your Practice?

By: Chris Bentson

Is it true that orthodontists earn more than today's CEOs? According to a recent *Wall Street Journal* blog written by Eric Morath, published on April 1, 2014, the answer is yes. According to a ranking of 821 jobs tracked by the U.S. Department of Labor, both orthodontists and CEOs were listed among the nation's ten best-paying occupations last year. While financial outcomes vary from practice to practice, most practice owners would agree that the business environment is more competitive, consumers are more informed and careful with their spending, and growth is more difficult today than in any past measurable period of modern day orthodontics. In fact, there is a fear that the orthodontic profession may be losing its luster to corporate dentistry. This has been a hot topic and there has been a great deal of discussion around this topic at the recent orthodontic meetings I have attended. Our observation is that the profession still produces enviable financial results, but the economic environment over the last seven years has produced fundamental changes in consumer behavior. This article will discuss how some current consumer trends may help explain recent patient flow data and what some growing practices are currently implementing to keep their financial results at the top of the economic heap.

The Great Recession that began in December 2007, which economists declared ended in March 2009, has now been over for five years. However, the bounce out of that recession has been anemic, at best, leaving many practice owners wondering how to lure prospective patients to start orthodontic treatment. Indeed "thrift" is the new "black" with many consumers.

## An Innovative Trend in Orthodontic Practice Branding

An Interview with Dr. Paul McAllister

About two months ago an email was delivered into my inbox from a former Bentson Clark & Copple client, with the subject line "I need your help". Any email from a client, current or former, is treated with high importance; however, based on the subject line, I thought it may be spam, requesting me to send money to a Nigerian bank account. To my surprise, it was a sincere email from Dr. Paul McAllister, which read:

*I am in the process of having a professional logo designed for an orthodontic practice. I am hosting a contest among professional designers through a website called 99designs.com. Attached to this email are links to a poll of what I consider the top eight designs from the competition at this point. I would be honored if you would vote in my poll and give me any feedback you may have about the designs. I am especially interested in critiques of how they could be improved or what you don't like about the designs. My goals in a logo are clarity (easy to read and immediately understand whether from a T-shirt, a website or a moving car), simplicity (this goes to clarity and branding), and memorable style. I really appreciate your help!*

As the Director of Marketing at Bentson Clark & Copple, this quickly caught my eye. What an innovative and modern way to approach a practice logo design! I voted for my favorite design, provided some general feedback of why some of the logos appeared attractive and why others did not quite hit the mark for branding an orthodontic practice.

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The Bentson Clark reSource (ISSN 1559-1360) is published quarterly by Bentson Clark & Copple, LLC, 397 South Swing Road, Greensboro, North Carolina 27409. Periodicals postage paid at Greensboro, North Carolina 27409.

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397 South Swing Road

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Subscription Price: \$95.00 per year, 4 issues

Cover Price: \$28.00 each

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## Five Rules for Marketing with Video

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By: Dusty Green

**T**he past several years we have been taking to the streets preaching the gospel of online video, talking *ad nauseam* about video being the future of online marketing. But the fact, is video marketing is no longer the future. Video marketing is the here and now. It's no longer an option. It's become an absolute necessity when it comes to marketing your practice and attracting new patients.

This should come as little surprise to anyone, of course. Video has grown from an internet curiosity to *the* driver of 86% of the internet traffic around the world. And who's driving that traffic? *We are*. Whether on our desktops, our phones or our tablets, we find ourselves watching online video several times a day. Experts universally agree that trend will only continue to grow. In the orthodontic realm it's encouraging that so many practices now recognize the popularity and power of online video. Forward-thinking practices are using video to even introduce themselves to prospective patients, or to tell patients' stories through testimonials, or even promote their image through fun orthodontic music videos.

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## Engage Your Staff with Improved Phone Skills

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An Interview with Dr. Dana Fender & Jodi Peacock

**I**n a competitive environment, all systems in a practice need to be addressed, reviewed and polished at regular intervals. Over the last several years, making the phone ring with prospective new patients has gained more attention by orthodontic practice owners and their hired consultants. However, a new company, Engage, is taking the phone skills necessary to handle that phone call successfully to a professional level that is rarely achieved. The result is more calls meaning more opportunities to grow a practice. We recently had the chance to meet with the principals of Engage, two very successful veterans in orthodontics, Dr. Dana Fender and Ms. Jodi Peacock. We invited them to share some information on their new and innovative company with our readers.

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## Simple Solution: Be Happy or Be Gone

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By: Rosemary Bray

**S**o here I sit, entering my now 44<sup>th</sup> year in this great profession of teeth. 44 Years! Where did it go? Why is it going so quickly? Just like all of our moms told us...*the older you get, the faster it will go*. One thing my mom never DID tell me though was, "Love your work, find enjoyment every day at whatever profession you choose and if you're not happy there move on." She did not work outside the home and never knew the pressure of a "real job" for a paycheck, in an office environment.

Having been a team member working in dental or orthodontic offices for 30 years of the 44 total, I can look back and say not ALL days were joyful and fulfilling; however, everyday something awesome must have happened to keep me there and keep me in the profession of teeth. I travel so much now, lecture around the world, and meet so very many team members. I am saddened by how many there are who "aren't happy" at work, who grumble, who want out, who ask me for tips on where they should go to find a perfect work environment, a happy non-jealous team and a most generous, non-controlling, lackadaisical orthodontist from whom they might seek high paying employment. You'll notice I didn't say "for whom they can work".

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## The Numbers Game: Best and Worst Sources for Practice Site Selection

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By: Scott McDonald

**W**e are in the business of numbers, especially those numbers that deal with the numbers about demographics. Are all sources of data for site selection and practice promotion equal? Not really. In this brief article, we will discuss the most and least reliable sources for data.

No data source is 100% perfect. This is especially true when we try to reconcile why one source says that there are 135 dentists in a Zip Code and another source says there are 95 in the same Zip Code. Often, it is not a matter of being "wrong" so much as it is a matter of definition. Is a temporary associate to be counted in the total or not? We also try to avoid the obvious traps of practices that claim staff as being doctors or multiple listings of a single doctor. It happens all the time. Sometimes retired doctors are left in the databases. In one area of the country, a doctor must be dead for three years before they drop out of databases. It is a headache but we do our best.

